12th, before the State could take separate action, a resolution passed the Confederate Congress giving to the Confederate Government charge of the questions between the several States and the United States Government. That this would involve delay was apparent at once to the Governor and Council, and a despatch, was immediately sent to Mr. Cobb, the president of the convention at Montgomery, urging that it was due to South. Carolina to get possession of Sumter at a period not beyond the 4th of March, oft which day Mr. Lincoln's administration would come into power.

Governor Pickens wrote the next day (February 13th) to Mr. Cobb a very able letter[1] setting forth at length the importance to his State of obtaining possession of Fort Sumter, and stating that it was the intention of the State authorities to attack the fort as soon as their preparations should be completed. The writer dwelt upon the extreme importance of getting possession of the fort during the administration of Mr. Buchanan.

" If war can be averted," wrote he, " it will be by making the capture of Fort Sumter a fact accomplished during the continuance of the present administration, and leaving to the incoming administration the question of an open declaration of war.

Such a declaration, separated, as it will be, from any present act of hostilities during Mr. Lincoln's administration, may become to him a matter requiring consideration. That consideration will not be expected of him, if the attack on the fort is made during his

[1] Pickens to Cobb; 1 W. R., 254.